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Fortunately also the author has returned again in an Introductory Chapter to reconsider in the light of recent discussions the language of the New Testament writers, in particular their contact with literary language and their Semitic coloring. The last of these sections will especially interest American scholars on account of the present trend of criticism in this country, as will the special appendix on the same subject by the Rev. C. L. Bedale, which is promised for the last part of the volume.

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THE JESUS PROBLEM. A RESTATEMENT OF THE MYTH THEORY. J. M. ROBERTSON, M.P. Watts & Co., London. 1917. Pp. vii, 264. 5s.

Convinced that Jesus is a purely mythical figure, Mr. Robertson undertakes the ambitious task of presenting "a defensible historical view" of Christian origins to supplant the "mythical narrative of beginnings" contained in the New Testament. Modern critical study upon the Gospels is said to have ended in complete failure. Order can be introduced into the chaos only by recognizing that these documents are a mere tissue of myth. Hence the real problem for the historian is simply to propound a suitable theory regarding the rise of the alleged myth. When approached from this angle Christianity is found to have sprung from a pre-Christian Jesus-cult in which the celebration of a crucifixion and the eating of a sacramental meal were central. The crucified victim in the myth is supposed to have been called "Son of the Father," a title which is equated with Barabbas (Bar-Abbas). The occurrence of "Jesus Barabbas" in some manuscripts of Matt. 27 16 convinces our author that originally Jesus (i.e., Joshua, "Saviour") and Barabbas were rival hero-divinities of the same type. Therefore "the hypothesis forced upon us by the whole history, then, is that there had subsisted in Jewry, in original connection with a sacrificial rite of Jesus the Son of the Father, a sacrament of a Hero-God Jesus, whose Name was strong to save" (p. 81). By the year 70 A.D. the cult had become sufficiently distinctive to initiate a definite propaganda in competition with the rest of Judaism. Its relatively rapid growth is credited primarily to the superior efficiency of its organization. Its earliest literary document was the Didache, an adaptation of an older Jewish work. In the course of time fictitious Epistles and Gospels were produced in support of the practices and teachings of the cult. All the New Testament books belong in this class, except perhaps the Epistles of James and Jude. They alone have even the semblance of genuineness.

The position of those who deny the historicity of Jesus has not been materially strengthened by Mr. Robertson's book. It presents no new data of importance and it follows in general the line of argument commonly employed by representatives of this school. The early Christian writings still extant in the New Testament are set aside without any effort to test their reliability by the application of a modern scientific historical criticism. In place of constructive data drawn from these substantial documents readers are offered a congeries of "inferablys" and "manifestlys," supported by only intangible evidence often of more than dubious worth and derived from sources that have no actual historical connection with early Christianity.

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BOOKS ON BABYLONIA AND ITS RELATION TO WESTERN ASIA:

THE EMPIRE OF THE AMORITES. ALBERT T. CLAY. Yale Oriental Series. Vol. VI. Researches. The Yale University Press. 1919. Pp. 192.

RECORDS FROM UR AND LARSA DATED IN THE LARSA DYNASTY. ETTALENE M. GRICE, Ph.D. Yale Oriental Series. Vol. V. Babylonian Texts. Yale University Press. 1919. Pp. 56. Plates LXXXVIII.

CHRONOLOGY OF THE LARSA DYNASTY. ETTALENE M. GRICE, Ph.D. Yale Oriental Series. Vol. IV, 1. Researches. Yale University Press. 1919. Pp. 43.

In 1909 Professor A. T. Clay issued *Amurru, the Home of the Northern Semites*, in which he maintained that our whole conception of the cultural relations of western Asia must be changed. The commonly accepted view that the Semitic peoples had their home in the Arabian peninsula from which they spread over the more fertile countries to the east, north, and west, he held to be entirely erroneous. Not only did he maintain in that volume that Israel's culture was not of Babylonian origin, but on the contrary that the culture of Semitic Babylonia either originated in the west or had a long period of development there before it was carried into Babylonia. In other words he maintained that the dissemination of the northern Semitic peoples did not move from the east to the west, but from the west to the east. Now, ten years later, he issues another volume whose avowed purpose is to assemble all the facts that bear upon the history and religion of the western Semites, to substantiate further the claims made for the great antiquity of the Amorites, to show that Ur of the Chaldees was the capital of the Amorite empire, and to demonstrate that the generally accepted theory of the Arabian origin of the Semites is utterly baseless.